LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for starting a casting operation in a two-roll casting device without start-up strand, ~~characterized by~~ comprising the following steps:

[[·]] setting an operating casting thickness (D); ~~and~~

rotating the casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~ at a casting-roll circumferential velocity which corresponds to a starting casting velocity (V_{gSt})[[,]] and which is lower than a steady-state operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr})[[,]] ;

[[·]] feeding metal melt ~~(12)~~ into a melt space ~~(11)~~, which is formed by the rotating casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~ and the side plates ~~(8)~~ bearing against them, and forming a cast metal strip ~~(21)~~ with a substantially constant, predetermined cross-sectional format while at the same time increasing the casting velocity (V_g) to a strip-forming casting velocity (V_{gBb})[[,]] ;

[[·]] then increasing the casting velocity (V_g) to a strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}), which is significantly higher than a casting velocity (V_g) which is sufficient for ~~the~~ prevailing full solidification conditions, and separating off the metal strip ~~(21)~~ which has been cast thus far[[,]] ;

[[·]] setting ~~a~~ the steady-state operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr})[[,]] ;

~~diverting the subsequent cast metal strip (21) to a strip-conveying device (24)~~ and

commencing steady-state casting operation.

2. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the starting casting velocity (V_{gSt}) is lower than half the operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr}).

3. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~or 2, characterized in that~~ the starting casting velocity (V_{gSt}) is less than approximately 12 m/min.

4. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the starting casting velocity (V_{gSt}) is ~~still~~ at 0 m/min when metal melt starts to be ~~supplied~~ fed and is then accelerated.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising setting the strip-forming casting velocity (V_{gBb}) ~~is set so as~~ to correspond to a measurable desired mold level (h_{Gsp}).

6. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the strip-forming casting velocity (V_{gBb}) substantially corresponds to the steady-state operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr}).

7. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising regulating the strip-forming casting velocity (V_{gBb}) ~~is regulated~~ as a function of ~~the~~ a separating force (F_{Tr}) which occurs between the casting rolls.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}) is higher than at least one of the strip-forming casting velocity (V_{gBb}) ~~and/or~~ and the operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr}).

9. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ claim 8, wherein the strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}) is 5% to 40% higher than at least one of the strip-forming casting velocity (V_{gBb}) ~~and/or~~ and the operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr}).

10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising superimposing a brief increase in the casting

thickness (D) by 5 to 40% ~~is superimposed on~~ onto the increase in the casting velocity to the strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}).

11. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising setting the strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}) ~~is set~~ as soon as the metal melt in the melt space ~~(11)~~ has substantially reached ~~the~~ a desired operating mold level (h_{Gsp}).

12. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising separating the cast metal strip ~~is separated~~ off at the strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}) by causing the cast strip ~~being~~ to be torn off under the action of the metal strip's own weight in the casting nip ~~(18)~~ between the casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~.

13. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising separating the cast metal strip ~~is separated~~ off at the strip-separating casting velocity (V_{gTr}) under the action of increased strip tension.

14. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising increasing the casting velocity (V_g) ~~is increased~~ to approximately the operating casting velocity (V_{gBetr}) at least during a period before ~~the~~ a desired operating mold level (h_{gsp}) is reached in the melt space ~~(11)~~.

15. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the steady-state casting operation is reached within 5 to 60 sec of the metal melt first being fed into the melt space ~~(11)~~.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising when starting a casting operation for the production of a very thin metal strip, setting a starting casting thickness (D_{St}) which is greater than the operating casting thickness (D) ~~is set~~, and reducing the ~~this~~ starting casting thickness is reduced to the operating casting thickness (D) at the earliest after a cast metal strip with a substantially constant, predetermined cross-sectional format has been formed.

17. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further

comprising determining continuously at least one of reference data relating to a) the instantaneous casting velocity (V_g) and the instantaneous mold level of the metal melt, ~~and/or~~ b) the instantaneous separating force (F_{Tr}) between the casting rolls ~~and/or~~ and the nip width (G) between the casting rolls ~~and/or~~ and c) the strip thickness of the cast metal strip ~~are determined continuously~~ while casting is starting up and ~~are fed~~ feeding the reference data of at least one of a), b) and c) to a calculation unit (36)[[,]]; ~~and on the basis of~~

based on a mathematical model for the starting operation, ~~these~~ using the reference data ~~are used~~ to generate control variables for the casting velocity, for the position of a strip-guiding device ~~(22)~~ and for the conveying velocity of the cast metal strip in a strip-conveying device ~~(24)~~ and ~~to transmit~~

transmitting these control variables to ~~the~~ drive units ~~(5, 6, 25, 27)~~ of ~~these~~ the strip conveying devices.

18. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim ~~15, characterized in that~~ claim 17, further comprising generating a control variable for the spacing positioning of the casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~ with respect to one another, ~~in particular a starting casting thickness (DSt), is additionally generated~~ from the mathematical model.

19. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim ~~15 or 16, characterized in that~~ claim 17, wherein the mathematical model comprises a metallurgical model relating to ~~the~~ at least one of formation of a defined microstructure in the cast metal strip ~~and/or to the~~ and influencing of the geometry of the cast metal strip.

20. (Currently Amended) A two-roll casting device for carrying out ~~the~~ a method for starting a casting operation of a metal strip without a start-up strand ~~as claimed in one of the preceding claims 1 to 19~~, comprising

two casting rolls, ~~(1, 2), which are coupled to~~ rotary drives coupled to the casting rolls to ~~(5, 6) and~~ rotate the rolls in opposite directions[[,]]; ~~and~~

side plates ~~(8)~~, which bear against the casting rolls and together form a melt space ~~(11)~~ for receiving ~~the~~ metal melt; ~~(12), as well as~~ at least one displaceable metal strip-guiding device ~~(22)~~ and at least one metal strip-conveying device; ~~(27), characterized in that~~

[[-]] ~~the casting rolls (1, 2) are assigned~~ a velocity-measuring device ~~(34)~~ for the casting rolls for determining ~~the~~ an instantaneous casting velocity (V_g);

[[-]] ~~the melt space (11) is assigned~~ at least one of a) a level-measuring device ~~(16)~~ for the melt space for determining the instantaneous mold level (h_{gsp}) of the metal melt,

[[-]] ~~and/or~~ b) a separating-force measuring device for one of the casting rolls ~~(1, 2) is assigned a separating-force measuring device (30)~~ for determining the instantaneous separating force (F_{Tr}) between the two casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~,

[[-]] c) a position measuring device for ~~and/or~~ the casting rolls ~~(1, 2) are assigned a position-measuring device (31)~~ for determining the instantaneous nip width (G) between the casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~,

[[-]] ~~and/or~~ and d) a strip thickness-measuring device ~~(32)~~ arranged on the strip exit side of the casting rolls for determining the instantaneous strip thickness (D) of the metal strip ~~(21)~~ leaving the casting rolls ~~(1, 2) is arranged on the strip exit side of the casting rolls (1, 2)~~,

[[-]] a calculation unit connected by signal lines to the velocity-measuring device ~~(34)~~ and the level-measuring device ~~(16) and/or~~ and at least one of d) the separating-force measuring device, ~~(30) and/or~~ e) the position-measuring device ~~(31) and/or~~ and f) the strip thickness-measuring device ~~(32) are connected to a calculation unit (36) by signal lines~~,

[[-]] ~~the calculation unit (36) is connected by~~ signal lines connecting the calculation unit to the rotary drives ~~(5, 6)~~ of the casting rolls ~~(1, 2)~~, to a position-control device ~~(25)~~ of the strip-guiding device ~~(22)~~ and to the drive ~~(27)~~ of [[a]] the strip-conveying device ~~(24)~~.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 20, ~~characterized in that at least one of the two casting rolls (1 or 2) is coupled to~~ further comprising a casting-roll adjustment device coupled to at least one of the two casting rolls ~~(7)~~, and the calculation unit ~~(36)~~ is additionally connected by a signal line to the casting-roll adjustment device ~~(7) in order~~ to set a starting casting thickness (D_{St}) which is higher than ~~the~~ an operating casting thickness (D).

22. (New) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising prior to ~~connecting~~ commencing steady-state casting, diverting the cast metal strip to a strip-conveying device.

23. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the control variable generated is a starting casting thickness ($_{Dst}$).